

## Use of Corporate Social Responsibility in Environmental Protection: Modern Mechanisms of Environmental Self-Regulation

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**Abstract :** Fifty years of existence and development of international environmental law brought a deep disappointment with efficiency and effectiveness of traditional command and control mechanisms of environmental regulation. Agenda 21 agreed during the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro 1992 was one of the first international documents, which explicitly underlined the importance of public participation in environmental protection. This participation includes also the initiatives undertaken by business corporations in the form of private environmental standards setting. Twenty years later during the Rio 20+ Earth Summit the private sector obligations undertaken during the negotiations have proven to be at least as important as the ones undertaken by the governments. The private sector has taken the leading role in environmental standard setting. Among the research methods used in the article two are crucial in the analysis. The comparative analysis of law is the instrument used in the article to analyse the practice of states and private business companies in the field of sustainable development. The article uses economic analysis of law to estimate the costs and benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility Projects in the field of environmental protection. The study is based on the four premises. First is the role of social dialogue, which is crucial for both Corporate Social Responsibility and modern environmental protection regulation. The Aarhus Convention creates a procedural environmental human right to participate in administrative procedures of law setting and environmental decisions making. The public participation in environmental impact assessment is nowadays a universal standard. Second argument is about the role of precaution as a principle of modern environmental regulation. This principle can be observed both in governmental regulatory undertakings and also private initiatives within the Corporate Social Responsibility environmental projects. Even in the jurisdictions which are relatively reluctant to use the principle of preventive action in environmental regulation, the companies often use this standard in their own private business standard setting initiatives. This is often due to the fact that soft law standards are used as the basis for private Corporate Social Responsibility regulatory initiatives. Third premise is about the role of ecological education in environmental protection. Many soft law instruments underline the importance of environmental education. Governments use environmental education only to the limited extent due to the costs of such projects and problems with effects assessment. Corporate Social Responsibility uses various means of ecological education as the basis of their actions in the field of environmental protection. Last but not least Sustainable development is a goal of both legal protection of the environment, and economic instruments of companies development. Modern environmental protection law uses to the increasing extent the Corporate Social Responsibility. This may be the consequence of the limits of hard law regulation. Corporate Social Responsibility is nowadays not only adapting to soft law regulation of environmental protection but also creates such standards by itself, showing new direction for development of international environmental law. Corporate Social Responsibility in environmental protection can be good investment in future development of the company.

**Keywords :** corporate social responsibility, environmental CSR, environmental justice, stakeholders dialogue

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